

20 NOV 1997

HISHAM SAYS MALOTT'S STATEMENT POSITIVE

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 20 (Bernama) -- Deputy Primary Industries Minister and Umno vice head Datuk Hishamuddin Tun Hussein said today the recent comments by the US ambassador to Malaysia, John Mallott, on US-Malaysia relations were positive.

Malott, in calling on both Washington and Kuala Lumpur stop rhetoric that could jeopardise their good relations, admitted that it was not proper for US congressmen to demand the resignation of a democratically elected leader of another country.

Malaysians have been angered by the action of congressman Robert Wexler to sponsor a resolution to demand that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad apologise or resign over his alleged anti-Jew remarks.

Dr Mahathir had clarified that he was not anti-Jew and that his statement had been misinterpreted.

"I feel the statement (by Malott) is very, very responsible ... it was also brave of him to make it and I believe the statement was made based on his experience and knowledge about Malaysia and his understanding and experience regarding our prime minister," Hishamuddin told reporters after witnessing an underwriting signing ceremony for Habib Corp here.

"I also believe his statement was made out of his realisation that our prime minister is one of the most tolerant, liberal and progressive Islamic leaders in the world.

"This attack on us by a small portion of the American Congress is based on a very shallow understanding of the true position as regards to Malaysia and our leader."

Hishamuddin said more efforts must be made to promote "people to people relationship." -- BERNAMA

MK SHY